



Winter 2009

Volume 18 No. 1

## SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**ABOVE:** The three-wheeled Cushman was a popular model in the 1960s. Here unknown golfers chat with SC golf pro Fielding Abbott. **BELOW:** This red Studebaker is owned by Denny Blockmon.



### Search underway for oldest golf car and unusual custom models SCAHS to stage first Custom Golf Car Show Feb. 7

by P. Atwood Fenner

Do you drive an older golf car, a three-wheeler?

Do you think it might be the oldest golf car in the Sun Cities?

If you do, or know someone else who has an older car, contact Ed Allen, chairman of the Feb. 7 Custom Golf Car Show sponsored by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. Ed's phone is 623-975-1815 or you can reach him at the Model Home at 974-2568.

The Custom Golf Car Show is a first for the area and should draw new visitors to the Society's Model Home Museum, a 1960 model home adjacent to Oakmont Rec Center. And Ed hopes to find the oldest operating golf car in Sun City and Sun City West.

"We invite those who own customized golf cars to put them on display from 9 to noon Saturday Feb. 7 in the Oakmont Rec Center West Parking Lot, adjacent to the museum," says Ed. When he finds the oldest, operating golf car in the Sun Cities, hopefully, it will be one of those three-wheelers that were popular in the 1960s when Sun City was founded. And he has made arrangements to have Sun City West cars delivered to the show by trailer.

There is no fee to participate. And there will be awards and refreshments, all free.

The golf car was invented in the decade preceding the opening of Sun City on Jan. 1, 1960, and Sun City is credited with an important role in the success of the golf car. Early residents found the golf car suitable for many errands around town, and it soon was known as a "neighborhood vehicle."

Then other communities also began using the cars for more than

**See Golf Cars page four**

10801 Oakmont Dr.—Sun City, AZ—85351

**Open Hours—1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday—Wednesday—Thursday—Friday**

Phone: (623) 974-2568

E-mail: scahs@frys.com

Web site: [www.scazhistory.org](http://www.scazhistory.org)

*The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is certified by the Arizona Historical Society*

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**Message from President David Verble**

**Down the road of history**

It seems like some of us have been down this road before. As we currently find ourselves in one of those historical recessions, it is evident that history repeats itself. If we have not yet learned that from experience, we might have a slight memory loss or at least a partial learning disorder.

**Good news: Dues rollback!**

Once again the economy has become a huge constriction in our lifestyle and forces us to seriously examine the use and distribution of our resources. That is equally true for all facets of our society. Our families, businesses, institutions, museums, churches – all elements – must seek an affordable level of providing for continuing survival. Of course, the same goes for your Sun Cities Area Historical Society. Thus, in the recognition of these tough times, the Board of Trustees has reconsidered the increased membership dues previously announced in the last newsletter and rolled them back to prior levels. That is the good news!

So the rest of the story is we do seek additional sources of funding so that we can continue to serve the community and still prepare for the great 50<sup>th</sup> year celebration of the founding of Sun City. So, if it fits within your budget or charitable nature, we would be pleased to receive your extra gift to the Society for our financial well being and to allow us to serve you better. (There is a renewal form inside this newsletter.)

During the coming year, the Board will be considering how to increase the prominence of our Model Home within and around the community. We feel that identifying ourselves as a “Museum” in signage and in print might help to peak interest of passers-by and those who read of our presence and offerings. Thus, you might see some changes along those lines in the near future. We need much more attraction to the public to gain membership and favor in our midst.

As we prepare to enter 2009, there will be many opportunities for members to participate in supporting the preparation for 2010. We will gladly receive your offer to help.



Twenty-three people enjoyed the historical tour of the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott Nov. 19. Actress Jody Drake as Sharlot Hall conducted the tour.



**AMONG SUN CITY'S first clubs are the Swimming Club, left, and the Sun City Sewing Club. Formed in the '60s, they provided hours of recreation and camaraderie for the residents of the new active retirement town. These photos are from the files of The Del E. Webb Development Corp., which became the archives of the SCAHS Historical Society.**

## IN SEARCH OF YESTERDAY

BY EDSON ALLEN

Social activities have always been an important part of the active adult lifestyle of the Sun Cities. While each of today's communities have more than 100 chartered clubs, plus state clubs and service organizations, where did it all begin? What were the first clubs formed in Sun City and Sun City West?

According to the 25th anniversary edition of *Jubilee*, the first residents began moving into Sun City in April, 1960. One report said that the first club was Needle Arts and Crafts, formed on July 4. The swimming pool was a popular gathering spot, and it's also claimed that a swimming club was first.

A sign erected on the south side of Grand Avenue where Fry's parking lot sits, read "Sun City's Agricultural Center." DEVCO took care of plowing, furrowing and irrigation - and even planted the first seeds. Residents were invited to help themselves to the vegetables. By year's end, an Agricultural Club was formed.

Residents became active in many ways that first year, forming an exercise club, a Saturday night dance club, chess and camera clubs. Craft-minded folks formed ceramics, art, wood and mosaic clubs. Still other clubs grew up around golf, shuffleboard and cards. One short-lived early group was the 61 Club, so named because they danced away the final hours of 1960.

The early SCW residents were no less active. Many had moved from Sun City and wanted to start similar clubs in the new community. One of the first was a Bicycle Club with as many as 50 cyclists setting out after breakfast for an hour's ride through the new streets.

Card playing was popular, and bridge, canasta and pinochle clubs sprouted. These were joined by an art club and various dance clubs. Within seven months of the arrival of the first residents, 14 clubs were meeting regularly.

In September, 1979, just shy of a year from the time the first residents moved in, the first clubs to be chartered were:

- Sun City West Art Club with almost 400 members.
- Toy-Ki Silvercraft West Club, beginning with 35 members and growing to more than 500. The unusual name came from a visit to the Heard Museum where members searched for a term that complemented their craft. A museum expert suggested the Flathead Indian word for silver: "Toy-Ki."
- Westerners Square Dance Club with more than 350 members.

Thirteen more clubs were chartered in the last three months of 1979, giving residents many ways to celebrate the active adult lifestyle that symbolizes the Sun Cities.



**WHEN FIRST OPENED**, golf courses often looked like Hurricane Katrina had passed through. Here in 1959 is Sun City's first course with no houses, few trees and empty land as far as the eye could see. A new Model Home Museum exhibit on Sun City golf

courses will open during the February 7 Custom Golf Car Show in the Oakmont Rec Center West Parking Lot. Bob Lucas will display his collection of antique golf clubs, balls and memorabilia.

Museum file photo

## Old, custom golf cars to go on display Feb. 7

### From page 1

transportation to and on the golf course.

This writer remembers being anxious that my mother drove a three-wheeler in the early 70s, because they were not as stable as the newer four-wheel models. She used it to drive on Thunderbird, several blocks on Del Webb Boulevard, across Grand Avenue to the divided Grand Center for groceries and laundry. Sometimes she went all the way to Peoria Avenue to volunteer as a Friend of the Library at Fairway Library, then the only library in town.

Once I even had to drive her golf car when my auto was in the shop. I went to all my daytime writing assignments and the News-Sun Office without incident, and re-charged it during the lunch hour. I had to remember to use arm directional signals and to

take all my belongings with me to each assignment, as there was no way to secure anything safely in the open car.

It was not as much fun, I remember, driving it to my evening assignment after dark. When stopped at intersections, one felt very vulnerable, knowing that someone had once thrown an empty soda can at my mother, when she had been stopped at an intersection. Eventually, Mother traded her three-wheeler in for one with four wheels, and I breathed easier, knowing how much safer she was, especially turning corners.

In addition to the display of custom golf cars, inside the Model Home there will be a new exhibit on golf courses in the Sun Cities and Bob Lucas will have a display of antique golf clubs and balls and other memorabilia.

# Some trustees leave; others come on board

Seven new trustees were elected at the November Annual Meeting and four had terms which expired in December: Loretta Allen, Sandy Goldstein, Paul Phillips and Dorothy Rucker.

The new SCAHS trustees include Edson Allen, Edward Cirillo, Priscilla Fenner, Arlene Macy, Bret McKeand, Bill Pearson and Donald Tuffs.

Edson is a past president of the SCAHS and was editor of the *Sun City West Silver Celebration* the history of SCW's first 25 years. He writes the *In Search of Yesterday* column for the Society's newsletter and many of its articles.

Edward retired as Director of Pension Accounting for the IBM Corp. after 31 years and worked as a controller for New York City. He moved to Sun City West in 1991 and has served as president or chairman of PORA, SCW Rotary Club and Rotary Endowment Fund, Freedom Foundation and Inter-Faith Community Care Board. He was also Exalted Ruler of the SC Elks Lodge and was an Arizona State senator for six years.

Currently editing the Society Newsletter, Pris got her masters in Journalism/Sec. Education at ASU while teaching high school in Tuba City on the Navajo Reservation in the '70s. Since retirement she co-founded the Sun City Players Readers Ensemble, edited the Players' Playbill and is a founding member of both the Peoples Valley/Yarnell and Sun Cities Area Historical Societies. She was raised in Wisconsin.

Arlene moved to SCW from Ohio in 1995 while raising a family and working 23 years in the

insurance industry. She is currently a volunteer for Sun Cities 4 Paws Animal Rescue and pet adoptions at PetSmart in Surprise. She is past treasurer for SCW Visitors Center and current president of SCW Garden Club.

Bret is president of Arizona Operations of the Independent Inc. Newspapers, and lives in Peoria with his family. He is a past president of the NW Chamber of Commerce, Arizona Diamond Club and the Arizona Newspaper Assoc. He was raised in New Lenox, Ill., and has worked for the Independent Newspapers for 25 years, including stints on the Sun City and Sun City West Independents.

Bill spent 26 years working for the UFCW 789 in St. Paul, Minn., as union rep, secretary-treasurer and president. He and his wife bought their Sun City home and rented it out before they were eligible to move here at 55. He has been on the Sun City Home Owners Assoc. Board and produced their 20-page magazine on the history of the community. He has also served on the board of the Sun City Visitor Center.

Don has worked in the Sun City/Sun City West area for more than 30 years after starting with the Del Webb Co. in marketing and public relations. He was the first manager of the Sundome in 1980. He is an emeritus board member of the Sun Health Foundation and the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts. He is currently a partner with Benson & Tuffs Financial Services in Sun City West and lives in Carefree.



**SCAHS NEW TRUSTEES** who recently completed an orientation session: Front row from left are Bill Pearson,

Arlene Macy, Priscilla Fenner and Ed Cirillo. Back row: Bret McKeand, Don Tuffs and Edson Allen.

# 'Del Webb' was present at Annual Meeting

The presence of Sun City's founder-builder was felt during the Nov. 6 Annual Meeting of the SCAHS. And many at the meeting were photographed with the six-foot- four photo cut-out of the illustrious Del E. Webb. "Del" now "speaks" to visitors in the Model Home Museum in an interactive display.

Edson Allen presented an informative slide show about Webb.

About 75 were present when new trustees were elected as fol-

lows: Edson Allen, Edward Cirillo, Priscilla Fenner, Arlene Macy, Bret McKeand, Bill Pearson and Donald Tuffs. (See thumbnail bios page 5)

President David Verble presented a review of 2008 activities which include: the C.A.R.S. Show; the new baseball display at the Model Home Museum; historian Jody Drake as Sharlot Hall appeared at the Spring Meeting; the application for grants and the results; electrical upgrades to the model home; the initiation of strate-

gic planning; the republishing of the Del Webb Book thanks to funding by Connie McMillan and the November bus trip to the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott.

When thanked for her financial support, Ms. McMillan said that residents should be happy "to have the opportunity to be part of the history, not of where you are from or raised your children, but of one of the most unique retirement communities in the country."

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## Rummage . . .

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*The SCAHS needs your useable household items  
for our March 5 and 6 Rummage Sale  
at the Model Home Museum in Sun City.*

Please put your items aside (no clothing, please) and bring to the Museum beginning Feb. 26, or phone Ed Allen at (623-975-1815) for Sun City West drop-off.

***GIVE YOUR CASTOFFS A SECOND CHANCE!***

# IT'S TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2009

After holding membership fees constant for more than three years, the Board of Trustees voted earlier in 2008 to increase fees for 2009. However, in light of the current economic conditions, in December the Trustees voted to rescind the increases.

Call it a year-end present for our members!

But, because our expenses have increased over the years, if you can, please consider becoming a Supporting Member or a Patron when you renew your membership.

Our thanks go to those of you who have already renewed. We hope you will take advantage of all the Historical Society offers throughout the new year.

Being a docent is challenging also. Following a short period of training, they begin the real fun:

- Greeting and giving tours of the Model Home Museum
- Filing in the vertical files
- Processing Membership Applications
- Answering phones
- Receiving donated materials
- Showing historical DVDs
- Changing seasonal decorations
- Helping with special events
- Working their own schedule

If this sounds like a volunteering situation you might enjoy, please check the Docent Box on the form below.

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**Membership form for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society – 2009**

New\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal\_\_\_\_\_ Docent\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check level of membership - Make checks payable to SCAHS

_____ Individual \$10	_____ Patron \$50
_____ Family \$15	_____ Organization \$25 +
_____ Supporting \$25	_____ Additional Gift _____
_____ Business \$50	Total enclosed _____ Check # _____

**Mail or bring to: SCAHS, 10801 Oakmont Dr., Sun City, AZ, 85351  
Phone 623-974-2568**

**SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**WINTER CALENDAR**

**3 p.m. Mon. Jan. 19: Trustees meet in Model Home.**

**9 to noon Sat. Feb. 7: Custom Golf Car Show, Oakmont West  
Parking lot. (story p. 1)**

**3 p.m. Mon. Feb. 16: Trustees meet in Model Home.**

**8-2 p.m. Thurs., Fri. March 5, 6; Rummage Sale at Model Home  
carport and yard.  
(Drop off items beginning Feb. 26 - no clothing, please.)**

**3 p.m. Mon. March 9: Trustees meet in Model Home.**

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM PAGE 7**

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
10801 Oakmont Dr.  
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